Exeter Centre for Ethno-Political Studies International Conference:  
‘Ethno-Politics and Intervention in a Globalized World’  
27-30 June 2010  
University of Exeter

Call for Papers

A cutting-edge, multi-disciplinary conference exploring the role of ethnicity and nationalism in the 21st century

Conference convenor: Professor Gareth Stansfield

Hardly a day goes by without a political or social manifestation of ethnicity crossing the headlines of international and national news. The conflict situations in Darfur, Iraq and Palestine; new state formations in the Balkans; issues of multiculturalism and security in Western cities; and the re-interpretation of historical memories and myths in places as far apart as Cornwall and Central Asia simultaneously point to the salience of ethnicity as a critical factor in today's complex world.

The Exeter Centre for Ethno-Political Studies (EXCEPS) is an exciting initiative which was established in 2007 following the award of a grant by the Leverhulme Trust to the University of Exeter. EXCEPS examines the role of ethnicity and nationalism in politics and conflict via a multi-disciplinary approach that brings together academics and practitioners from an array of fields. We will be holding our first international conference from 27-30 June 2010.

Gareth Evans, former head of the International Crisis Group, will provide the opening plenary. Other speakers include: Brendan O’Leary, University of Pennsylvania, USA; Jennifer Medcalf, Royal Military Academy Sandhurst, UK; Stefan Wolff, University of Nottingham, UK; Cindy Skach, Harvard University, USA; Rogelio Alonso, Universidad Juan Carlos Rey, Spain; Nina Glick Schiller, University of Manchester, UK; Jon Western, Mount Holyoke College, USA; Gabi Pieterberg, UCLA, USA; Richard Whitman, University of Bath, UK.

The conference will be organized around seven sub-themes covering different aspects of the theme of ‘Ethno-Politics and Intervention in a Globalized World’. These sub-themes are:

Foreign Intervention in Ethnic and Ethno-National Conflicts
Regional Security Organisations and the Regulation of Violent Ethno-Political Conflict
Culture and Memory in Reconciliation Processes
Questioning Ethno-Politics: Diasporic Political Cultures, Subjectivities and Spaces
Contemporary Issues in the Middle East
Violent Radicalisation and Terrorism in the Ethno-Politicised World
Mechanisms for Managing Ethnic Conflict: Secession, Autonomy, Elections
For further information, please go to the EXCEPS conference website: http://centres.exeter.ac.uk/exceps/events/conference.html. Any questions can be directed to the sub-theme convenors. To submit a proposal for a paper or a panel, please send an abstract of maximum 500 words to exceps-conference@exeter.ac.uk by 15 March 2010. Please indicate clearly in your application which sub-theme you would like it to be considered for. Successful applicants will be notified by 31 March 2010.
Sub-theme 1: Foreign Intervention in Ethnic and Ethno-National Conflicts

Sub-theme convenors: Mary-Alice C. Clancy and Annemarie Peen Rodt

Call for Papers
Although it is debatable as to whether or not the Cold War’s end led to an increase in ethnic and ethno-national conflicts throughout the globe, the collapse of the bipolar system has granted states a greater ability to overtly intervene in – and ignore – such conflicts. Regarding armed intervention, the mixed record of both unilateral and multilateral intervention into ethnic and ethno-national conflicts underscores both the differences between ‘peacekeeping’ and ‘peacemaking’, and the moral hazards that such interventions can create. In terms of ‘peacebuilding’, inasmuch as ‘bottom up’ approaches are the normative preference of most scholars and practitioners of ethnic and ethno-national conflict management, recent relative ‘successes’ (e.g. Northern Ireland) and seeming future failures (e.g. Bosnia and Herzegovina) both highlight the importance of exogenous actors in facilitating, upholding and/or eviscerating power-sharing settlements. Moreover, the recent history of relatively successful settlements like call for a fundamental reassessment of the role of foreign actors in the negotiation and implementation of such settlements, the importance of ‘hard’ versus ‘soft’ power and the utility of unconditional dialogue when negotiating with violent non-state actors.

Therefore, the aim of this sub-theme is to re-examine and assess the role of foreign actors in the intervention and management of ethnic and ethno-national conflicts. ‘Intervention’ and ‘management’ are defined broadly and encompass – but are not limited to – themes such as military intervention, peacebuilding, power-sharing, social and economic policy; the role of NGOs; human rights; the media and multi-track diplomacy. Papers may be either theoretical and/or empirical in focus, and the convenors welcome papers from any region in the world.

It is envisioned that the sub-theme will consist of approximately 3–4 panels, with a plenary remarks delivered by Rogelio Alonso (Universidad Rey Juan Carlos, Madrid) and Jon Western (Mount Holyoke College, USA)
**Sub-theme 2: Contemporary Issues in the Middle East**

Sub-theme convenors: Gareth Stansfield, Hannes Artens, Hashem Ahmadzadeh

**Call for Papers**

The Middle East region remains a zone of considerable interest for research into ethno-political dynamics, conflict, and management. Issues concerning ethnicity and identity permeate society, culture, and politics in the region and have been influenced, exacerbated, and magnified by a range of endogenous dynamics. Particularly since the 9/11 attacks, the salience of ethnicity and sub-state identities have seemed to come to the fore, yet some of the region’s most destabilizing situations – especially Palestine/Israel, and also including ethno-sectarian problems in Iraq and Lebanon, and regional aspects of Sudanese politics – have origins of greater antiquity. This sub-theme seeks to address four contemporary issues in Middle East politics that have direct relevance to the overall theme of this conference. These issues relate to the ongoing development of ethno-political mobilization in Iraq, Palestine/Israel, Lebanon, and Sudan. The panels will describe and analyze the efforts made to manage the process of resolution, taking into account the actions of local, regional, and international actors.

Since the establishment of the modern state system in the Middle East in the aftermath of the First World War, many parts of the region have suffered from problems of stability that have significant ethno-political aspects to them. The combination of nationalist projects and imperial boundary making, particularly in the lands previously administered by the Ottoman Empire, created a system prone to the rise of ‘dominant nationhoods’ and related ethno-nationalist reactions. Lebanon in particular is a clear example of the profound impact ethno-communal identities have had in the development of political and social life. The establishment of the State of Israel and the conflict of two peoples in one land also stands as an example *par excellence* of ethno-political conflict in the Middle East and how such conflicts remain as seemingly intractable in the twenty-first century as they were in the preceding century. In other parts of the region, post-colonial developments combined with the (re)-emergence of ‘modern hatreds’, bringing to the fore complex ethno-political conflicts. Commencing in 1983, the Second Civil War in Sudan raged between the north and south and witnessed appalling scenes of suffering and deprivation. And returning to the lands of the former Ottoman Empire, ethno-political dynamics in Iraq became all too apparent following the demise of the Ba’th regime in 2003 and the reordering of power in the state.

The aim of this sub-theme is to consider each of these four situations – Lebanon, Sudan, Iraq, and Israel/Palestine – and with a focus particularly on the mechanisms by which ethno-communal divisions in political life have been managed, both by internal and external actors and presenting new strategies aimed at resolving ethno-political conflict in each of these examples in the future. Examples of this may include the considering of the ‘one-state’ solution in Palestine/Israel, the status of the Kurdistan Region in Iraq, and the implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement in Sudan.
Sub-theme 3: Regional Security Organizations and Regulation of Violent Ethno-Political Conflict

Sub-theme conveners: Klejda Mulaj and Annemarie Peen Rodt

Call for Papers

It is a foregone conclusion nowadays that violent ethno-political conflicts worldwide need urgent attention, but the international community is struggling to cope. Demand far outweighs supply in international conflict regulation. The UN is overstretched and after the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan countries are increasingly reluctant to intervene bilaterally. But are regional actors stepping up to the challenge? Organizations such as the European Union and the African Union are rapidly developing conflict regulation capabilities, whilst regional actors elsewhere in the world strive for similar capabilities.

This sub-section of the conference takes a closer look at regional security organizations and their emerging role in the international security arena. It will debate the purpose of conflict regulation and assess whether regional security organizations could (and should) help regulate violent ethno-political conflict in the 21st century, sometimes even beyond their own geographical boundaries. The aim of this part of the conference is to investigate the role of regional security organizations in the prevention, management and settlement of violent ethno-political conflicts worldwide.

Participants are invited to consider the variety of tools that different regional security organizations have at their disposal and the possibility and desirability of a future division of labour in international conflict regulation. Challenges faced by regional security organizations as well as prospects for maximizing their security provisions will be central to the discussion. We welcome submissions that are either theoretical or empirical in focus, and which may examine any region of the world.
Sub-theme 4: Culture and Memory in the Reconciliation Processes

Sub-theme convenors: Ilan Pappé, Clémence Scalbert Yücel and Paul Griffiths

Call for Papers
Culture, history and memory play an active role in shaping ethnic groups which constantly mobilise them either in time of peace or of conflict. The research so far has focused on the role of these kinds of memories in shaping national and ethnic identities and positions at time of war and confrontation. Less has been written about the way reconciliation efforts, ending ethnic conflicts, incorporated ‘travail de mémoire’ and engaged with historical narratives and cultural practices.

This role is played both from above and below. Again, the literature focused so far more on the way memory and reconciliation were approached by political elites through legal structures and national institutions. However, there is reconciliation from below. First people and civil societies react to reconciliatory effort from above and secondly they get involved in more informal reconciliation policies or activities that can also precede or accompany state involvement.

The aim of this sub-theme is to bring a comprehensive understanding of the role of memory and culture in the reconciliation processes in all these aspects, but with a focus of those areas which have been more neglected in the research. Thus we are reaching for works that discuss and compare the role of non-institutional actors against that taken by political elites and institutions in the domain of culture, history and memory in the processes of reconciliation. These analyses can highlight the dialectical and at times antagonistic relationship between efforts of reconciliation in ethno-politics of efforts from above and the response to them from below.

The convenors expect papers to address the previous questions in any of the following areas:

- The construction of collective memories in reconciliation process through textbooks, journals, archives, schools, universities, etc.

- The discussion of the places and spaces of memory: the role of museums, landscapes and cityscapes, urban planning, memorial services, commemoration ceremonies etc.

- Performing memories through theatre, film, music, fine art, architecture, etc.

- People to People initiatives on the ground and in cooperation, or resistance of, governmental policies of reconciliation
Sub-theme 5: Violent Radicalisation and Terrorism in the Ethno-Politicised World

Sub-theme convenors: Jonathan Githens-Mazer and Marjetka Pezdirc

Call for Papers
The term radicalisation has recently been the focus of much academic research and policy implementation – especially where there is an understanding that violent radicalisation underpins terrorism, and policy-makers and practitioners especially assume that counter-radicalisation may alleviate the threat of terrorist violence. In the immediate aftermath of the 9/11 attacks, too much of this research and practice focused on questions of Islamically inspired political violence, but increasingly policy makers are beginning to recognise that understanding and countering violent radicalisation must mirror the realities of terrorism itself – and that much 21st Century terrorism is about issues of ethno-national conflict including movements of national separatism, minority rights, and rightwing/racist extremism. This section of the conference will seek to conceptualise, problematize and understand the relationship between violent radicalisation and radicalisation in a broad range of cases, and seek to take stock of the current academic and policy-making debates on this issue.

The notion of the underlying causes for radicalization of certain subcultures, social classes, minorities or ethnic groups must be brought to the forefront of any attempt at counter-radicalization. The issue of obstructing public awareness of the causes becomes especially acute when radicalization escalates to terrorism. Excessive counter-terrorist measures are often accompanied by simplified discourse which usually ignores the reasons for violent radicalization and deals only with the act of terrorism itself. A very biased perspective is employed which serves as legitimization for violent counter-actions of the more powerful of the two participants in the conflict. Such practices not only escalate the conflict but also perpetuate the causes for radicalization thus deepening the rift they seek to close. This sub-theme of the conference may examine the possible merits of utilising an approach, which would work towards addressing the initial social conflict thus defusing the potential for violent radicalization.

The aims of this sub-theme are to conceptualise, problematize and draw out empirical comparisons between ethno-politically inspired violent radicalisation, whether this violence is based on ethnicity, nationalism, religion and/or other forms of identity. It will particularly seek to highlight shared areas of definitions, methodologies and empirical findings, across a range of national and cultural contexts in order to assess whether comparisons in this field are justified, and to be able to better understand how and when terrorism is being deployed as a tactic of identity.
Sub-theme 6: Questioning Ethno-Politics: Diasporic Political Cultures, Subjectivities and Spaces

Sub-theme convenors: Sean Carter, Sarah Keeler, Ruba Salih, Christine DiFato

Call for Papers
The concept of ‘ethno-politics’ seems to imply a series of unitary political actors and processes which are drawn into question by the on-the-ground realities of transnational mobility and global migration. While traditional readings of diaspora have often emphasized collective identification and solidarity with a real or imagined homeland, more recent attention has been paid to the internal complexity of diasporic groups in terms of differences of age, gender, class, political affiliation and religious identity. Indeed, diasporic formations may often reinforce notions of common heritage and origins, but almost always simultaneously problematize a clearly defined relationship between place and identity, giving rise to notions of ‘cosmopolitan nationalism’ and ‘flexible citizenship’. Where ethno-politics emphasizes the ethnie in political thought and action, the complex and often contradictory processes present in diasporic political cultures mean that, for some, membership in a diaspora may serve to reinforce the ethno-politics of homeland, while for others this ethnie appears to take on a purely symbolic significance, In yet other circumstances, the ethnie is challenged altogether by new political, cultural and social projects and identifications. In spite of these diasporic challenges to a seemingly coherent ethnie, considerable scholarly and policy-oriented understanding of bounded ethnic ‘communities’ continues to inform state and non-state actors in addressing issues of migration, identity, citizenship, and political participation.

This sub-theme seeks to explore the ways in which migration, diaspora, and transnational mobility may shed light on the particular conditions in which ethnicity or national identity may (or may not) be identified as a significant sources of political sentiments, affiliations, and mobilizations. Secondly, the sub-theme aims to rethink ideas about what constitutes political space, political actors, and political mobilization. Ever larger numbers of migrants and refugees in both states of the global south and established ‘receiving’ countries of the west, and the increasing diversification this entails, has led to a politics of presence whereby seemingly apolitical acts such as participation in cultural festivals, and consumption of food, music, or fashion may take on highly political significance. We therefore also aim to address popular cultures as significant sites for the investigation of political dynamics, identities, forms of power, national projects and the ways in which political and cultural hegemonies are articulated, contested, challenged or reproduced.

For example, how do migrants themselves reconcile membership in distinct ethnic/diasporic ‘communities’ while also participating in various political spaces within and across their homelands and various ‘receiving’ societies? Are the informal registers of ‘cultural politics’ a means by which such multiple subjectivities can be negotiated? Can transnational public spheres be identified as a consequence of diasporas and global migration? How are national and or ethnic identities reproduced, challenged or negotiated through the articulation of new political and cultural registers?
We welcome submissions that are either theoretical or empirical in focus, and which may examine any region of the world; the conference aims to be interdisciplinary and any methodological or disciplinary approach to the themes is welcome. We particularly encourage submissions that take a critical approach to the conception and study of ethno-politics.

Potential themes might include, but are not limited to:

The significance of territory, de/re-territorialisation
Transnational or diaspora cultural politics
Transnational forms of collective mobilization
Gender and generation
Graduated sovereignty
New forms of governance/governmentality
The role of diaspora in conflict transformation
Refugees and un-recognized political actors
Transnational transmission of traumatic memory and political mobilization
State and non-state actors, policies towards ethnic ‘communities’, government attitudes towards ethno-politics
Sub-theme 7: Mechanisms for Managing Ethnic Conflict: Secession, Autonomy and Electoral Design

Sub-theme convenors: Lise Storm and Anaïd Flesken

The section on ‘mechanisms for managing ethnic conflict’ seeks to address the issue at three different levels, that is, from the lowest level where electoral design is sufficient for defusing the tension, the intermediate level where dynamics are such that nothing less than autonomy/federalism is a viable solution and, finally, the highest level where an ethno-nationalist movement demands independence through secession.

For the panel on secession, we are looking for both theoretical and empirical contributions to the debate. Issues sought covered include whether secession remains a viable option in the 21st century; and why ethno-nationalist minorities still aspire to gain a state of their own despite the relatively low probability of success.

Papers of a cross-regional comparative nature are of particular interest to the panel on autonomy and federalism, as the aim of this particular panel is two-fold: to examine different types of autonomy and of federal design, and to identify how autonomous arrangements and federal structures have been used to manage conflict and satisfy demands for self-determination without damaging the territorial integrity of the extant State.

Finally, the panel on electoral design seeks to shed light on how ethnic conflict can be managed without the need for either secession or introducing stringent constitutional provisions regarding autonomy/federal status. The core focus of this particular panel is the question of which electoral system is most likely to lead to widespread political support and thus democratic stability in ethnically divided societies. Of specific interest is the issue of the relationship between proportional representation (PR) and political support – is PR more likely to provide legitimacy than other types of electoral systems, or does PR simply reinforce ethnic divisions?